

8/20/09

OBAMA HEALTHCARE OVERHAUL

VO: 25

President Barack Obama is still talking compromise on a comprehensive health care bill to extend coverage to nearly 50 million Americans who lack it and contain rising costs. Privately, Democrats are preparing a one-party push, which they feel is all but inevitable. Obama urged religious leaders Wednesday to back his proposals, arguing that health coverage for Americans is a "core ethical and moral obligation." He prepared for a pep talk to a much larger audience of liberal activists, whose enthusiasm is in question. Polls continued to show slippage in support for the president's approach, although Americans expressed even less confidence in Republicans' handling of health care.

CASH FOR CLUNKERS

VO: 20

The U.S. government's "cash for clunkers" autos sales incentive program may be wound down as soon as early September, The Wall Street Journal said Thursday, citing a person familiar with the matter. The U.S. government is expecting a surge in last-minute clunker deals when a closing date is announced and wants to avoid a situation where dealers agree to sales after the program's funds have been exhausted, the source told the newspaper.

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8/21/09

IMMIGRATION DEBATE

LOURDES MELUZA - WASHINGTON, DC

PKG 2:16

Immigrant rights activists said that a White House meeting this week to reaffirm support for immigration reform -- featuring a surprise appearance by President Obama -- had helped mollify growing frustration over what some perceived as backpedaling on reform promises.

But many said that action will be needed to keep the faith among immigrants and their supporters, particularly Latinos who turned out in record numbers to help elect Obama last year.

CASH FOR CLUNKERS ENDS

VO: 18

As car shoppers head into the final weekend of the Cash for Clunkers program, a couple of car companies are offering cash advances for dealers. The Obama administration has announced the popular promotion will end Monday night after burning through about \$3 billion in just a month. The rebate money has been fronted by dealers, and many of them have complained of slow reimbursements from the government.

Now, both Chrysler and General Motors say they will start making cash advances to help dealers with their cash flow. The automakers are offering the advances for up to 30 days. They say the extra money will be available as long as the program remains in effect.

HEALTHCARE SENATORS

VO: 19

Bipartisan negotiations on the health care overhaul continue among a group of three Democrats and three Republicans on the pivotal Senate Finance Committee. The so-called Gang of Six convened a conference call late yesterday to resume their talks. Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the GOP's key negotiator, said this week that he'd have to take his constituents' concerns into consideration in continuing talks. But after members of the group spoke for about an 1 1/2 hours Thursday, senators said they remained committed to producing a bipartisan bill. They say they plan to increase the focus on affordability and costs. Finance Chairman Max Baucus of Montana calls the conversation "productive."

SWINE FLU LATEST

VO: 29

The World Health Organization is urging nations to speed up their preparations for swine flu. A WHO official warns there may soon be "an explosion" in cases until peak transmission of the flu is reached. He says that means most countries may see swine flu cases double every three to four days -- for several months.

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08/24/09

ATTENTION DEFICIT DRUGS & KIDS

VO :22

Calls to poison control centers for U.S. teenagers who have overdosed on attention deficit drugs rose 76 percent over eight years, researchers reported. This is nearly the same as the 80 percent rise in prescriptions for such drugs, Dr. Jennifer Setlik and colleagues at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center reported.

FLU DRUGS FOR ADULTS

VO :18

The flu drugs Tamiflu and Relenza may not be worthwhile to treat seasonal influenza in healthy adults, British researchers reported. "Recommending the use of antiviral drugs for the treatment of people presenting with symptoms is unlikely to be the most appropriate course of action," wrote Jane Burch of the University of York and colleagues.

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08/25/09

CASH FOR CLUNKERS EXTENSION

VO :24

The ride is over for consumers. But the government is indicating it may be willing to give dealers another extension to turn in their Cash for Clunkers paperwork. Because of the crush of dealers trying to apply for the rebate program online, the government had already extended Monday night's 8 p.m. Eastern deadline to register sales until Tuesday at noon. Now, the Transportation Department says the Web site won't be fully functional before Tuesday morning. But, it says dealers will be provided time to submit pending deals equivalent to the time that was lost while the system was down. Computer problems have plagued the program, which proved far more popular than the government expected. A National Automobile Dealers Association lawyer says thousands of dealers with probably millions of dollars of deals have been unable to submit them.

RETIREES FEAR SHRINKING SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS

VO :24

The news that Social Security benefits will likely be frozen next year dismayed many older Americans, who said they feared that rising expenses for medication and other necessities would drive them into retirement poverty. The average monthly Social Security benefit for retirees is \$1,153 this year; usually, it goes up in step with the rate of inflation. Increases have ranged this decade from 1.4 percent to a high this year of 5.8 percent.

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08/26/09

CANCER TABACCO

VO: 21

Tobacco use will kill 6 million people next year from cancer, heart disease, emphysema and a range of other ills, global cancer experts said in a report issued on Tuesday. The new Tobacco Atlas from the World Lung Foundation and the American Cancer Society estimates that tobacco use costs the global economy \$500 billion a year in direct medical expenses, lost productivity and environmental harm.

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8/27/09

JOBLESS CLAIMS TO DROP

VO: 15

The number of U.S. workers filing new claims for jobless benefits fell last week to 570,000, and those collecting long-term unemployment benefits dropped to the lowest level since April, government data showed on Thursday. Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast new claims slipping to 565,000 in the week ending Aug. 22 from 580,000 the prior week, which had been previously reported as 576,000.

FDIC SHRINKING FUND

VO: 24

The FDIC will reveal Thursday how much its reserves have been depleted by all the bank failures this year --81 so far. That may give a clue whether it will need help itself before the year is out, as some analysts suspect. At least one banking expert thinks the public should expect the fund to "go negative" at some point. That's happened only once before -- during the savings and loan crisis of the early 1990s.

CENSUS 2010

MARIA ROSA LUCCHINI - WASHINGTON, DC

PKG 2:01

Taking a look at a campaign aimed at getting children to get their parents to participate in the 2010 census in the Metropolitan area.

INFLUENZA - VACCINE

VO: 25

Scientific advisers to President Barack Obama may have asked the government to speed up the availability of swine flu vaccines, but they are unlikely to be ready before October, the new head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Wednesday. And imperfect tests for the pandemic H1N1 virus means it will be impossible to get precise numbers on how many people are infected, said Dr. Thomas Frieden.

YOUNGER AMERICANS OVEREXPOSED TO RADIATION RISK

VO: 17

Younger Americans are being exposed to worrisome amounts of radiation from medical scans that increase their risk of cancer, U.S. researchers said on Wednesday. They said the cumulative risk of repeated exposure to radiation from medical scans is a public health threat that needs to be addressed.

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8/28/09

PROSTATE CANCER DIAGNOSED EARLIER, RACE GAP NARROWS

VO: 19

Men with prostate cancer are being diagnosed at a younger age and earlier stage today than in years past, and the racial disparity in stage at diagnosis has decreased significantly, researchers report today in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

COLLEGES SWINE FLU

VO: 19

Colleges across the country are seeing spikes in the number of students with suspected cases of swine flu as dorms fill up and classes begin for the fall semester.

CASH X CLUNKERS APPLIANCES

PEDRO ROJAS - HOUSTON, TEXAS

PKG 1:52

Trading in old home appliances will soon earn consumers up to \$200 towards the purchase of high-efficiency upgrades. The program, authorized by Congress earlier this year, will be capped at \$300 million taxpayer dollars, and will apply to household appliances like refrigerators, washing machines, and dishwashers, as well as furnaces and air-conditioning systems. The existing cash for clunkers auto program is on its second round of funding, and struggling U.S. automakers Ford (NYSE: are both upping production in response to demand from dealers. Appliance makers and retailers are hoping to see similar results, as the industry has suffered amid lagging home sales.

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08/31/09

SWINE FLU ADVICE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN & NEW MOMS

VO :30

Government officials are continuing their public relations campaign to get us to care about the H1N1 virus (aka swine flu) without scaring us out of our wits. That has proven to be tricky: The White House estimated that up to 90,000 Americans could die of swine flu this year. the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that children were at greatest risk of being infected with H1N1 (14 times more likely than adults over age 60) and that babies and toddlers were most likely to be hospitalized with severe complications.

NEW FAT-FIGHTING DRUG HAS ANTI-DIABETES ACTION TOO

VO :23

Researchers searching for a cure for obesity said on Thursday they have developed a drug that not only makes mice lose weight, but reverses diabetes and lowers their cholesterol, too. The drug, which they have dubbed fatostatin, stops the body from making fat, instead releasing the energy from food. They hope it may lead to a pill that would fight obesity, diabetes and cholesterol, all at once.

TOYS 'R' US/CASH FOR CRIBS

VO :18

The "Cash for Clunkers" program is being called a big success for consumers. Now a toy store chain is offering its own program to spur spending.... cash for cribs. Toys 'R' Us is giving customers the chance to trade in used cribs, car seats and other children's items in exchange for a store discount. The program runs until September 20th. Customers will get a 20-percent discount on selected items, and there's no limit on the number of products they can turn in. Old energy-hogging refrigerators and freezers qualify for recycling and cash from more than 60 utilities across the nation. And the federal government is making money available to states so consumers could get rebates of \$50 to \$200 for new, more energy-efficient appliances later this year in a so-called "cash for appliances" program. Combined, the appliance initiatives have a goal similar to the cash-for-clunker program for autos: They get less-efficient appliances off the nation's energy grid in favor of newer efficient ones.

=====END OF REPORT =====